

Citizen's Transportation Oversight Committee
Arizona Department of Transportation
Meeting Minutes
August 23, 2001

A Citizen's Transportation Oversight Committee (CTOC) meeting was held at the Peoria City Hall, 1st Floor Pine Room, 8401 West Monroe Street, Peoria, Arizona on August 23, 2001 with Chairman William G. Beyer presiding.

Members Present:

William G. Beyer, Chairman
Paul Schwartz, Maricopa County District 4
Jim Lykins, Maricopa County District 2
Ron Gawlitta, Maricopa County District 3
Tom Liddy, Maricopa County District 1

Members Absent:

Brian Campbell, Member-At-Large

Others Present:

Donald Kraft, Citizen
Victor Mendez, ADOT
Kwi-sung Kang, ADOT-RFS
Ken Forgia, Vice Mayor of Peoria
Elizabeth Neville, ADOT
Diane "D. D." Barker, Citizen
Jim Book, Glendale Transportation Department
David Moody, City of Peoria
Randy Altenhoff, Wester Newspaper
Jan Brewer, County Board of Supervisors, Dist. 4
Pat Dennis, Peoria Councilwoman
Jason Redman, Citizen

Ron Travers, Former Mayor of Peoria
Carolyn Doebler, ADOT
Bill Hayden, ADOT
Dan Lance, ADOT
Bill Evans, Citizen
Daniel Burnette, Citizen
Patricia Hickson, Citizen
Kevin Tyne, Maricopa County
Ed Johnson, Youngtown Citizen
Joe Ryan, Citizen
Ralph Coleman, Citizen
Suzi Baddett, Citizen

1. Call To Order and Member Recognition:

Chairman Beyer called the Citizen's Transportation Oversight Committee meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. Welcome:

Peoria Councilwoman Pat Dennis welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for coming.

3. Status of Northwest Valley Transportation Projects:

Bill Hayden, ADOT Ombudsman, commented on the following:

- Pima Freeway, from I-17 to Scottsdale Road, is schedule to open August 31, 2001. He invited everyone to attend the opening celebration this Saturday, August 25, 2001.
- Several key six-pointed intersections on Grand Avenue have been programmed for improvements over the next five years, beginning with 27th Avenue and Thomas. Connector ramps between Grand Avenue and the Loop 101 will also be addressed. Grand Avenue, from Sun City West to Whitman, will be widened to four lanes.
- ADOT has initiated a Design Concept Report Study to address the South Mountain Freeway. Numerous public meetings will be held over the next three years to provide the public ample opportunity to participate in the decision making process.
- In February of this year, the Maricopa Association of Governments recommended Lone Mountain Road be selected as the connector from Lake Pleasant Road to I-17. Maricopa DOT, ADOT and MAG are working with the west side communities to determine other viable options and are in the process of initiating an Environmental Assessment for the area. He anticipated there being a great deal of public participation over the next two years.

Chairperson Beyer expressed concern that other alternatives to Lone Mountain Road would be considered, explaining the political leadership of the west valley fought for that alignment. He asked to have additional information regarding the process for looking at other alternatives presented at the next meeting.

Dan Lance, ADOT, said their process requires they consider all viable alignments, however, it is their goal to make Lone Mountain the final solution.

Chairperson Beyer recommended ADOT use discretion when determining the number of stop lights it will place on the 8.2 mile stretch of Grand Avenue, explaining too many lights could create a bottleneck situation.

4. Peoria Transportation Overview:

David Moody, Public Works/Engineering Director, updated members on the following issues:

- Grand Avenue -
He thanked ADOT and the Board for championing the 91st Avenue interchange onto Loop 101, noting actual construction starts next month.
The Olive Avenue/Grand Avenue/75th Avenue Overpass will help relieve one of the many problems on Grand Avenue.

The Long Range Plan now includes plans to address the bottleneck created at Peoria Avenue where Grand Avenue goes from six to four lanes.

- Loop 101 – We have been working with ADOT staff on traffic signal coordination issues. Union Hills at Loop 101 is currently Peoria's biggest bottleneck, primarily due to the lack of bridges over New River at 83rd Avenue and Deer Valley Road. Both bridges are scheduled to be built within two years, however, Union Hills and 83rd Avenue and Union Hills at the Loop 101 will continue to be problematic. The City of Peoria has initiated a Planning Study to look at access issues on the Loop 101.
- Loop 303 - We will be heavily involved as the Loop 303 goes through its Environmental Assessment and the Design Concept Report.
We have been discussing an interim solution to the Loop 303 and, working with Mr. Lance, some issues have been resolved.
We are in dire need of regional transit funding because the current funding system does not help regional fixed-route transit.

Questions and comments regarding the presentation were as follows:

- Chairperson Beyer asked when they anticipate working on Union Hills.

Mr. Moody said the Deer Valley bridge project with Maricopa County DOT has been accelerated and the City of Glendale has already started the design of the 83rd Avenue Bridge. The study that will look at future access issues will start September 5, 2001.

Mr. Hayden commented that MAG and ADOT staff recently initiated a bottleneck study to identify and prioritize major bottleneck areas in the valley.

5. Call to the Public:

Jan Brewer, County Board of Supervisors, District 4, thanked CTOC for coming to the west valley to address their issues. She said Maricopa County is doing their part to address regional transportation issues, noting the county maintains and operates 2,800 miles of roadway and right-of-way each year. She said they are working hard to ensure the critical transportation artery, formerly known as the Loop 303, is completed. She reported that construction of the \$12 million overpass at Grand Avenue is ongoing and expected to be completed by February. We are beginning to design the extension for the Loop 303 to Lake Pleasant Drive with an anticipated cost in excess of \$14 million. In response to numerous accidents, her budget has reprioritized funds to add turning lanes and new signals at Northern Avenue, Indian School Road and Olive Avenue. A Design Concept Report is currently underway to study future improvements to the Loop 303, including how to best connect it to I-10. The County is also working closely with ADOT on its alignment study to ultimately locate Loop 303 and connect it to I-17. She recommended Chairman Beyer send a strong message that Lone Mountain Road is the alignment of choice. She asked that CTOC focus on improving S.R. 60 in the west valley, stressing its importance to the west valley.

Chairperson Beyer noted the ½ cent sales tax is scheduled to go away in 2005, stating he believes it is still needed. He questioned whether the public and Legislature are confident that MAG is the appropriate regional transportation authority.

Ms. Brewer said transportation is a regional issue and should be handled by a regional entity, such as Maricopa County.

Pat Dennis, Vice Mayor of Peoria, asked that ADOT continue further west with overpasses on Grand Avenue. She said the Loop 303 needs to be funded, noting a lot of development in the area is willing to work with the cities and ADOT to make it a productive corridor. She agreed the ½ cent sales tax should be renewed, expressing her opinion transit should receive a larger percentage of the funding.

Joe Ryan, resident of Sun City West, addressed the Committee, submitting a written copy of his comments for entry into the record. He said the rate of vehicle miles traveled increases at a greater rate than population. He agreed the west valley is growing at a very rapid rate, pointing out, however, areas on the east side of the valley are too. He stressed the need for rapid transit and, as a means of funding it, he suggested the Legislature permit "mixed companies." He stated Arizona should be the gateway to the Grand Canyon, pointing out most traffic to the Grand Canyon goes through Las Vegas. He suggested people would actually pay for the privilege of having rapid transit right-of-way go through their property, rather than the state paying them.

Diane "D.D." Barker, citizen, said she has found ways to make transit work for her, suggesting others could too. She stated, while she supports a multi-modal transit system, they need to determine where current dollars are going. She pointed out students could and do utilize the public transit system, reducing the need for dedicated school buses.

Jim Book, City of Glendale, Transportation Department, strongly agreed with the sentiments expressed regarding Lone Mountain Road. He commended ADOT for being ahead of schedule on most of their projects. He commented on the benefits of using auxiliary lanes and urban TI's.

Pat Hickson, President of the Westbrook Village Homeowners Association, asked for CTOC's support of the Beardsley extension. He said growth to the north has been astounding and will continue in the future, creating horrendous traffic problems.

6. Next Meeting Date:

Arizona Department of Transportation
Traffic Operations Center
2302 West Durango Street
Phoenix, AZ
Tuesday, September 18, 2001
5:00 p.m.

7. CTOC Member Reports:

No reports were made.

8. Closing Comments and Adjournment:

Ron Gawlitta, CTOC member, said the state needs to get past the turf wars with property owners and the railroad and use current rights-of-way for elevated systems that do not interfere with existing traffic.

Mr. Ryan readdressed the committee, stating the cost of an elevated system is considerably less than a trolley system.

Mr. Gawlitta stressed the need to look at quality of life issues, stating it will be the determining factor for growth in the valley.

Mr. Paul Schwartz, CTOC member, said cars need to run at the same speed in order to maximize capacity on the highway. He said, rather than the proposed trolley system, a longer transit system would better serve the state.

Mr. Beyer called for any further public input and there was none.

Meeting adjourned at 7:30 p.m.